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THE REFERENCES TO THE "KING" IN THE
PSALTER, IN THEIR BEARING ON QUESTIONS
OF DATE AND MESSIANIC BELIEF.

THE difficulty in determining the date of the Psalms arises from the absence of decisive historical allusions. There is, it is true, a social and historical background, but it is ill-defined, and, being so, suits, or at least is not manifestly inconsistent with, all that is known of most of the post-exilic and parts of the pre-exilic period. Allusions to the temple as existing only preclude a pre-Solomonic and an exilic origin: persecution and distress were the rule, not the exception, from the close of the seventh century onwards. Much more clearly defined are the literary and theological characteristics of the Psalter; and it is these that will ultimately play the largest part in deciding the question of date; but the conclusiveness of the evidence derived from them becomes clear but slowly, and, from its very nature, affects only the *general period*. Attempts, therefore, to refer particular Psalms to particular events have in the past proved singularly fruitless; save perhaps in one or two exceptional cases, similar attempts in the future are likely to fare no better. Attention at present still needs to be fixed on the more general but far more important questions: Are any of the Psalms pre-exilic? If so, which?

The form of the question is justified by the general agreement of scholars that a majority, larger or smaller, of the Psalms is certainly post-exilic; even Ewald claims only sixty as pre-exilic, and few later scholars have claimed more.

Owing to the insufficiency in most cases of the data afforded by individual Psalms for determining with decisiveness the period to which they belong, all critics of

the Psalter have—of necessity, and therefore justifiably—been more or less governed in their several particular judgments by certain general *præjudicia*. Thus, long after the Davidic authorship of some Psalms attributed in the titles to David was acknowledged to be impossible, it was yet held that since so many were attributed to him, some must be really his. Starting from this *præjudicium*, critics, in the absence of anything directly and manifestly unfavourable to the theory, accepted the slightest favourable data as sufficient proof of Davidic authorship. But lately the validity, or rather the comparative worth, of this *præjudicium* has been increasingly questioned; it is for this reason, and not because of the illegitimacy of the method, that the reference of Psalms to David is doubted or denied. Indeed the absolute necessity of the method as distinguished from its particular application is seen in the light of the briefest sketch of the course of criticism.

The first result of breaking loose from the traditional prejudice was that critical ingenuity ran riot; the same Psalms were, by different scholars, for about equally conclusive reasons, assigned to any period between 1000 and 100 B.C. In this way commentaries on the Psalms became at once tedious and discouraging; tedious on account of the number of theories to be examined, discouraging through the inconclusiveness of the reasoning on which the theory finally accepted was based. Only quite recently has this critical license received a decisive check, and this it has received mainly, as all English students must remember with satisfaction, owing to the work of two English scholars—Professor Cheyne¹ and the late Professor Robertson Smith.² Dissimilar, in so many respects, as the contribution to Psalm criticism of these two scholars has been, it is alike in this: both insist that the argument for the date of a particular Psalm is not to be based on the internal evidence afforded by itself alone, but

¹ In his *Origin of the Psalter* (1891).

² Most recently in the *Old Testament in the Jewish Church* (1892), ch. vii., and additional note D., pp. 437-440.

that the Psalm must be first grouped, and the date of any individual Psalm be then determined in the light of its association with others with which it is externally or internally connected.¹

In the result Professor Cheyne, after the collection and investigation of an invaluable mass of detailed evidence, confirmed the conclusion previously reached, apparently on more general grounds, by Reuss and Wellhausen, that the Psalter was the product of the post-exilic period; every Psalm, with the doubtful exception of xviii., he referred to this period. Professor Smith also regarded the great majority of the Psalms as post-exilic, but at the same time decisively assigned some to the pre-exilic period.

Thus the license which followed the abandonment of the traditional prejudice has only been restrained by the establishment of a critical prejudice; and the history of criticism indicates that in the case of any *particular* Psalm two alternatives only are possible—freedom from prejudice resulting in complete scepticism, or guidance by prejudice, based on general considerations, to probable conclusions. In the case of the Psalter even more than elsewhere, literary criticism must content itself with bringing clearly into view the comparative probabilities of competing theories. Everything is to be gained by frankly recognising this; argument as to the date of particular Psalms is only of value between those who approach the question from the

¹ The value of the method so established has been very generally recognised. Kautzsch, *e.g.*, says: "Unleugbar ist, dass durch die Methode Cheynes thatsächlich manche dunkle Stelle aufgeheilt und eine weit grössere Einheitlichkeit des Psalters in biblisch-theologischer und ganz besonders auch in *sprachlicher* Hinsicht erwiesen wird, als man bisher einzuräumen geneigt war." See his review of Cheyne's "Origin of the Psalter" in *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, 1892, pp. 577-589; compare also Budde's review in *Theologische Literaturzeitung* (May 14th, 1892), who especially deserves thanks for correcting the ignorant assertion of certain English critics that Cheyne's work was a mere reproduction of German criticism. The influence of the work of Cheyne and R. Smith in subsequent literature may be seen in Bæthgen's commentary, the most important of recent commentaries, and Beer's excellent study, *Individual- und Gemeinde-Psalmen* (Marburg, 1894).

same general standpoint. For my own part I accept what I have termed the critical prejudice; in other words, in considering the dates of particular Psalms I start from what I consider a sound conclusion, viz., that the Psalter as a whole and in its general spirit is a product of the post-exilic period. The question at issue then is: If any, which Psalms, forming an exception to the general rule, are pre-exilic? The present discussion will be concerned with some of these supposed exceptions. An examination of recent criticism of the Psalter shows that Psalms are referred to the post-exilic period mainly on the ground of their literary and theological characteristics and the *general historical background*, but to the pre-exilic period on the ground of *special historical allusions*, which, it is urged, can be explained by the earlier date alone.

Among these special historical allusions are those to the "King." Of these Dr. Driver, for example, says, "The Psalms alluding to the King will presumably be pre-exilic."¹ Several other recent writers have expressed themselves to the same effect.² Now such a conclusion clearly affects, not alone the date, but also the interpretation of the Psalms in question. The validity of the inference as to date depends on the correctness of the assumption that the subject of these Psalms is an actual reigning king of Judah (or Israel), not an ideal, or, to use a more technical phrase, a Messianic king. If these Psalms refer primarily to a reigning monarch, they are Messianic only in the very secondary sense that they depict "the ideal glory of the [contemporary] theocratic king,"³ and are, in

¹ V. *Introduction*, p. 363. The remark is made directly with reference only to Pss. ii., xx., xxi., xxviii., lxi., lxiii., lxxii.; but the reference to the King, no doubt, largely determines the decision with regard to xviii., lxxxix., and cx., also. The suggestion on p. 360 should, however, also be noticed.

² From the reference to the King, Bæthgen infers that xx., xxi., xxviii., xxxiii., xlv., lxi., lxiii., lxxii., are pre-exilic; Kautzsch only makes the inference in the case of xx., xxi., xlv. (*Die Heilige Schrift des A. T. (Beilagen)*, p. 207).

³ Driver, *Introduction*, p. 363.

consequence, comparatively unimportant in the history of the development of the Messianic idea. Their Messianic character is something entirely different from that, for example, of the well-known passages in Isaiah, or, to refer to literature of the same class, of the Psalms of Solomon.

In the case, then, of the Psalms which refer to the King, exegesis and criticism are most closely connected; certain exegetical assumptions must largely determine the critical conclusion. Granted that the king be actual, these Psalms are most intelligible if a product of the pre-exilic period; or, again, certain critical assumptions tend to invalidate current exegesis. If these Psalms be post-exilic, some at least cannot be satisfactorily explained of a contemporary ruler. I propose, therefore, (1) to re-examine the nature of the evidence for and against the pre-exilic date of these Psalms; (2) to consider the validity of the exegetical assumption that the king referred to is a contemporary ruler; and then, (3) having made clear the difficulties connected with present methods of criticism and interpretation, to suggest an interpretation which will, in turn, affect the criticism.

I.

Disregarding twenty Psalms¹ in which the king is Yahweh, and three others² in which he is clearly a foreign monarch, we still find eleven³ in which the king is neither Yahweh⁴ nor a foreign monarch, but—in most cases clearly,

¹ The reference is direct in v., x., xxiv., xxix., xlv., xlvii., xlviii., lxviii., lxxiv., lxxxiv., xcix. (v. Baethgen on v. 4) xcvi., cxlv., cxlix.; indirect by the use of the verb מִלֵּךְ or the nouns מַלְכוּת or מְלֹכָה in xxii., xciii., xcvi., xcvii., ciii., cxlvi.

² cv., cxxxv., cxxxvi.

³ ii., xviii., xx., xxi., xxxiii., xlv., lxi., lxiii., lxxii., lxxxix., cx. In the last case the person addressed, though not termed king, is without doubt kingly.

⁴ It is worth noticing that in no single case is the term מֶלֶךְ used in the same psalm of both Yahweh and a Jewish monarch (whether real or ideal). Contrast Ps. Sol. xvii., v. 1, O Lord, thou art our King, henceforth, and even for evermore"; verses 35, 36, "And a righteous king

in others presumably—Jewish. In five¹ of these the king is also explicitly, or, by use of the verb מִשַּׁח, implicitly termed Yahweh's (or God's) Messiah. Yahweh's Messiah is also mentioned in three² other Psalms; but the inference³ that in these Psalms also the Messiah is a king, is anything but certain. The Hebrew usage of the term is sufficiently wide to require the precise meaning to be fixed by the context, and this in these Psalms is so uncertain that, as a matter of fact, the interpretation of the phrase is much disputed. Leaving, for the present, these three Psalms out of account, I turn to the eleven, where the king has been more generally regarded as a contemporary monarch.

In the first place, the distribution of these Psalms over the Psalter, considered in the light of R. Smith's conclusions, creates a presumption against regarding the *whole* group as pre-exilic; but if any⁴ of the group be post-exilic,

and taught of God is he that reigneth over them; and there shall be no iniquity in his days in their midst, for all shall be holy, and their king is the Lord Messiah"; v. 38, "The Lord himself is his King."

¹ Directly in ii., xviii., xx., lxxxix.; indirectly in xlv.

² xxviii., lxxxiv., cxxxii. The plural מְשִׁיחֵי in Ps. cv. 15, is also to be noted.

³ Made in the case of xxviii. by Driver and Bæthgen. On the other hand, in the case of lxxxiv. Bæthgen questions, and in the case of cxxxii. decides against, the reference of the term to a contemporary monarch. Driver is apparently in equal doubt, for he refers cxxxii. to the post-exilic period; and leaves the date of lxxxiv. an open question.

⁴ I would, however, make an exception in the case of xxxiii.; although this appears to me clearly post-exilic, I do not argue that therefore other Psalms referring to the king may equally well be so. For the mode of reference is quite different; in Ps. xxxiii. it is, or may be, purely proverbial. But that Bæthgen argues for the pre-exilic date on the ground of this reference, I should have left the Psalm wholly out of account; his remark "that the Psalm is at all events pre-exilic, is shown by the mention of the king (verse 16), who can only be an Israelitish one," is singularly indiscriminating. Why need the "king" of verse 16 be Israelitish more than the "horse" of verse 17? Again, would Bæthgen maintain that there was a king of Israel when Ecclesiastes was written because of the saying, "The king himself is served by the field" (v. 9). Driver significantly omits Ps. xxxiii. from his list, and, indeed, decisively pronounces it post-exilic (p. 364).

the argument, on the ground of the reference to the king, for the pre-exilic date of the rest, is weakened.

R. Smith's conclusions can, for present purposes, be sufficiently summarised thus:—The Psalter, in its present form, is the result of the last of some nine or ten editorial and redactorial processes which can be still traced. The earliest of these, the formation of the first Davidic hymn-book (Pss. iii.-xli., except xxxiii.), itself falls within the post-exilic period, probably not earlier than the middle of the fifth century. The second great collection (xlii.-lxxxiii.) of Psalms, itself a very composite whole, was certainly later than the first, and probably dates from the fourth century. Yet, later, an appendix (lxxxiv.-lxxxix.) was added to this second collection. The last collection (xc.-cl.) falls certainly later than 330, and almost certainly as late as 150 B.C. In a word, *all collections of Psalms of which we have any knowledge are post-exilic.*

From this, it is true, it by no means immediately follows that all Psalms contained in these collections are also post-exilic. Indeed, since there are good reasons for supposing that Psalms were written before the exile, it is, in itself, not unlikely that some pre-exilic Psalms are preserved in the Psalter. Only the burden of proof clearly lies on those who claim as pre-exilic any given Psalm in collections known to be post-exilic. Further it is reasonable to suppose that such pre-exilic Psalms as there may be in the Psalter, will be found, at least for the most part, in the earliest collections. Now how does the case stand with our group of Psalms? Three only are found in the earliest collection, four in the next, one in the appendix to the latter, one in the late and probably Maccabæan collection, and two, now standing in Book I., are without titles. *i.e.*, they would appear to have found their way into none of the collections which precede the final process. If these Psalms were all pre-exilic, why are they distributed through the Psalter as they are?

R. Smith's conclusions thus create a presumption against

regarding the whole of our group as pre-exilic. But carefully considered, they suggest other more or less weighty inferences and presumptions. By fixing the date of the collections, R. Smith directly fixed a downward limit for the composition of individual Psalms; for example, no Psalm in a collection closed about 400 B.C. may be assigned to a later date, except a good case can be made out for supposing it to have been subsequently inserted. Indirectly he also created an upward limit; early hymns once embodied in an authoritative collection were sure of preservation; but the very existence of such a collection would render the continued existence of old hymns not included increasingly precarious; there is, therefore, a certain presumption against hymns belonging to a later collection being much earlier than the date of the next previous collection. Judged thus, the downward limit of date of our eleven Psalms and their probable upward limit may be fixed thus:—

Pss. xviii., xx., xxi., were written not later than about 450-400 B.C.

Pss. xlv., lxi., lxiii., lxxii., lxxxix., are pre-Maccabæan, but probably not pre-exilic.

Pss. ii., xxxiii., cx., were not written later than about 150-120 B.C., and are less probably than the preceding pre-exilic.

The argument from distribution thus renders it improbable that some of these Psalms can refer either to a contemporary monarch of the old kingdom or to a Maccabæan prince, since they are neither so early as the exile nor so late as the Maccabees.

The second difficulty in assigning the whole of these psalms to the pre-exilic period is linguistic. In the case of none can I see anything in the language that favours a pre-exilic as against a post-exilic date, if it once be granted that the majority of the Psalms, including a considerable proportion of those in Books I. and II. are post-exilic. In general style, no doubt, the majority of Psalms in the later

books, especially Books IV. and V. differ from most of those in Books I. and II. ; and if we were not compelled, by other arguments than the linguistic, to pronounce many of the Psalms in the first two Books post-exilic, we might regard the two styles as, respectively, characteristic of post-exilic and pre-exilic psalmody. But Dr. Driver is unquestionably right in regarding as post-exilic not merely psalms such as xxv., xxxiii., and xxxiv., which in some respects resemble the type characteristic of the later books, but others in Books I. and II. which do not differ appreciably in general style from those containing references to the king. There is then no good linguistic reason for pronouncing our psalms pre-exilic ; on the other hand, several of them present phenomena which favour the hypothesis of post-exilic origin. I refer especially to ii., xlv., lxxii., cx.—Psalms which on the ground of distribution also are probably not pre-exilic and two of which may be Maccabæan. In a less degree the language is unfavourable to the pre-exilic origin of most of the rest. I will not here recapitulate the evidence, to which I have nothing to add ; it is presented very impartially by Professor Cheyne.¹

The third difficulty arises from the ideas and literary affinities of many of these psalms. How uniformly these again point to the post-exilic period (no one, to my knowledge, has yet ventured an argument from them for pre-exilic date) may be seen by reference to Prof. Cheyne's work.

Again avoiding the recapitulation of the evidence, I will in this case discuss with some fulness a single usage. I select it partly because it has hitherto, I believe, escaped notice, and partly because it has a bearing on my suggested

¹ In his *Origin of the Psalter*, especially in the "Linguistic Appendix." But he appears not to discuss an apparently late phrase (וְרָ וְרָ) common to several of these Psalms ; on the phrase, see Driver, *Introduction*, p. 293. In these Psalms it occurs five times—xxxiii. 11 ; xlv. 18 ; lxi. 7 ; lxxxix. 2, 5 ; elsewhere in the Psalms thirteen times. Outside the Psalter in Deut. xxxii. 7, and in ten exilic or post-exilic passages : Esth. ix. 28 ; Is. xiii. 20 ; xxxiv. 17 ; lviii. 12 ; lx. 15 ; lxi. 4 ; Jer. l. 39 ; Lam. v. 19 ; Joel ii. 2 ; iv. 20.

interpretation of the "King." This usage is the reference to a *plurality of kings*; such references form one of the numerous and striking features common to the Psalms, and Deutero-Isaiah. In order to appreciate this it is necessary to examine the usage throughout the Old Testament. We may at once of course dismiss passages which refer to a plurality of kings clearly defined by the context, such, *e.g.*, as speak of the "Kings of Israel and Judah." What we have to consider is references to "kings" spoken of quite indefinitely, or defined only in the most general way as "kings of the earth," "kings of peoples." These references are numerous, but almost entirely confined to the exilic and post-exilic literature; such earlier references as are found differ from the usage characteristic of Deutero-Isaiah and the Psalter. The pre-exilic references are as follows:—

1. "Hear, O ye kings; hearken, O ye princes," Jud. v. 3. Taken by itself this appears quite general; yet in view of the sharply defined geographical horizon of Jud. v., and the terms of v. 19, "The kings came and fought, then the kings of Canaan fought," the reference must be confined to the kings of Canaan.

2. "Are not my princes all of them kings," Is. x. 8. The usage here is predicative.

3. "I have also given thee riches and honour, so that there shall not be any among the *kings* (בַּמְּלָכִים) like unto thee all thy days," 1 Kings iii. 13.¹

4. "So king Solomon excelled *all the kings of the earth* in riches and wisdom; and all the kings² of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom," 1 Kings x. 23, 24.¹

5. "Yea, he (Chaldæa) scoffeth at *kings*, and princes are a derision unto him," Hab. i. 10.

In the last three cases the point of reference is to emphasise *the superiority in rank* of the person or people.

¹ These two passages are probably pre-exilic, though of doubtful date.

² So read by LXX. in Kings, and by both M. T. and LXX. in Chronicles.

The term used thus as typical of eminence occurs frequently in proverbial expressions—some certainly exilic or post-exilic, others occurring in chapters of Proverbs the dates of which are uncertain, but which are still generally regarded as pre-exilic; this usage is clearest in such a saying as “Seest thou a man diligent in business; he shall stand before *kings*: he shall not stand before *mean men*,” Prov. xxii. 28. Cf. also Prov. xxv. 2, 3; xxxi. 3, 5; Job iii. 14; xxxvi. 7.¹

If we contrast with such a saying as the last the following from II. Isaiah, “And *nations* shall come to thy light, and *kings* to the brightness of thy rising” (lx. 3), we must feel a difference. “Kings” has become a synonym of “nations,” and by both words alike the author is endeavouring to indicate the indefinite distance and extent of his geographical horizon. It is this, and not the idea of rank (which, however, need not necessarily be wholly absent), that he wishes primarily to express. It is, therefore, one of those stylistic characteristics of the writer, the significance of which lies in the close relation between them and his dominating ideas.² This term “kings” occurs nine times in II. Isaiah,³ the real *differentia* of its usage here and in earlier writers consisting in this:—

1. It has become virtually a synonym of terms such as “nations,” which are used to indicate universality.

2. The “kings” thus vaguely referred to appear as *contrasted with Israel*—vanquished that Israel may be set free, or subserviently bringing offerings that Israel may be glorified.

The connection of the term “kings” with “nations” is, it is true, found in Jeremiah xxv. 14, xxvii. 7: “For *many nations* and *great kings* shall serve themselves of them” (the

¹ Owing to the absence of a contrasted term, the usage is less striking in Prov. viii. 15; xvi. 12, 13. Job xii. 18 may also be compared.

² Cf. the usage of כִּנִּי in the same writer; and in this connection cf. G. A. Smith, *Book of Isaiah*, xl.-lxvi., pp. 108-110.

³ xli. 2; xlv. 1; xlix. 7, 23; lii. 15; lx. 3, 10, 11; lxii. 2.

Chaldæans); but here the "nations" and "kings" are *associated*, not contrasted, with Israel, while the phrase, itself different, "great kings," is not parallel to, but co-ordinate with the other phrase, "many nations." It expresses in Jeremiah a particular thought; in II. Isaiah, as in the Psalter, it betrays a constant background of thought. Similarly in the case of the passages from Kings quoted above: the contrast there is the expression of a particular and definite comparison. If Solomon had to be compared, he could only be compared with the other kings; but in II. Isaiah it expresses a dominant idea—the contrast between Israel and the "kings" and "nations" of the world.

Not only is the usage characteristic of II. Isaiah not found before the exile, but nothing quite like it¹ is found anywhere except in the Psalter. In the Psalms the term "kings" is used, just as in II. Isaiah, six or eight times, and about the same number of times in a slightly different way. Exactly similar to the Deutero-Isaianic usage is that of the term in three of the "king" Psalms:—

Ps. ii. 1, 2.—"Why do the *nations* rage, and the *peoples* imagine a vain thing? The *kings of the earth* set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against Yahweh." (Cf. also vv. 8-10.)

Ps. lxxii. 11.—"All *kings* shall fall down before him, all *nations* shall serve him." (Cf. also v. 10.)

Ps. cx. 5.—"Yahweh at thy right hand shall strike through *kings*, he shall judge among the *nations*."

The term "kings" is used somewhat indefinitely in xlv. 10, and is so far an indication of late date; but the

¹ The nearest parallels in exilic literature are Ezek. xxvii. 35 (cf. also xxvii. 33), but here the reference is to Tyre, and Lam. iv. 12, where the kings and inhabitants of the world are interested in the overthrow of Israel. Less similar are Is. xiv. 9, 18; Ezek. xxvi. 7; xxviii. 17; Jer. l. 51. The most interesting post-exilic usage is that in the "Priestly Code" Gen. xvii. 6, 16; xxxv. 11. Cf. also Is. xxiv. 20; but Ezra ix. 7 is quite dissimilar.

usage is not Deutero-Isaianic.¹ Rather more similar to the Deutero-Isaianic is the usage in lxxxix. 28.

The preceding analysis shows that a well-defined peculiarity of usage common to Deutero-Isaiah and certain Psalms (including three of the "king" Psalms) occurs nowhere else. It is no great inference that these Psalms are dependent on Deutero-Isaiah, or *vice versâ*, and few who have examined the relation between the two books will doubt that the former is the more probable alternative. Judged, then, by the use of the term "kings," Pss. ii., lxxii., cx. must be considered post-exilic. But, of course, the strength of the argument from stylistic and literary affinity depends on the accumulation of facts like the preceding all pointing the same way. Where similar indications of late date may be found I have already indicated.

It will be convenient at this point to summarise, with reference to a single Psalm—the second—the evidence for and against a pre-exilic origin. Against, we have—

1. The absence of title, indicating that it belonged to none of the earlier Psalm collections which preceded the compilation of the Psalter in its present form.
2. The language (cf. Cheyne, *Psalter*, p. 463).²
3. The ideas involved; *e.g.*, in the use of "kings" (see above for further evidence; cf. Cheyne, *Psalter*, pp. 238-240).
4. Its great influence, from the "Psalms of Solomon" (68 B.C.) onwards,³ compared with the absence of all trace of such influence earlier.

¹ The other references to a plurality of kings in the Psalter are, xlviii. 5; lxviii. 15, 30; lxxvi. 13; cii. 16; cxix. 46; cxlviii. 11; cxlix. 8. In cv. 14, cxxxv. 10, cxxxvi. 17, 18, the reference is to well-known historical events, but is apparently affected in its terms by the stereotyped parallel.

² Of course כִּי in v. 11 is corrupt; but I see no good reason for regarding the Aramaism מְלָכִים as a corruption of מְלִיכִים.

³ There are no traces of its influence within the Psalter itself, such as we find in the case of some other striking but presumably earlier Psalms, *e.g.*, viii., xviii.; Ps. cx. presents resemblance, but scarcely bears marks of

5. The absence of all early tradition of its connection with any pre-exilic monarch.

To set over against this cumulative evidence for post-exilic date, we have, in favour of earlier origin, simply and solely the reference to the king. Under the circumstances several scholars have not unnaturally been driven to ask whether this does necessarily point another way.

II.

The exegetical assumption, common to those who regard these Psalms as early, and to many who consider them late, is that the "king" is some contemporary ruler. By the latter it has been suggested that this ruler is either a foreign monarch—this is suggested particularly with regard to Pss. xlv. and lxxii.—or a Maccabæan prince. The former alternative seems to me quite improbable; and the latter is questionable in the case of Pss. xviii., xx., xxi., xlv., lxi., lxiii., lxxii., since from their position in the earlier collections, it is very improbable that they were written so late as the second century. I am also far from convinced that a Maccabæan prince would be termed מֶלֶךְ, though I can believe that he might be described as endowed with some kingly functions: in other words, Ps. cx. may refer to a Maccabee, but the rest of these Psalms do not.

But leaving the question of date out of account, there seems to me a strong presumption against the theory that *all* these Psalms, or even most of them, had in view an actual contemporary person. For in no single case is the reference sufficiently clear and exact to have led to any agreement as to who the king is: in Hupfeld-Nowack's commentary, after an examination of various views, a *non-liquet* is wisely pronounced. Only, indeed, in one of these Psalms (xlv.) is there any particularity of detail

dependence. On the other hand, we find it quoted in the earliest post-canonical literature—Ps. Sol., xvii. 26; it is probably alluded to in Enoch xlvi. 10; cv. 2; and references to it abound in the New Testament.

whatever; most of the rest, apart from other considerations which may confine the Psalm within certain limits of time, so far as the reference to the king is concerned, might refer equally well to any king from David to Zedekiah or any other Jewish ruler who subsequently bore the title of king. Now this vague and indefinite allusion to actual contemporary persons is, I believe, wholly alien to the Semitic genius, and quite unparalleled in the Old Testament. To appreciate the significance of the vagueness of these Psalms, we need to bear in mind the concreteness of reference in poems such as David's two elegies, where in each case he mentions by name the person he laments; the same definiteness marks Deborah's song; and even in Ezekiel's allegory (c. xix.), although no names are given, the allusion is clear; the same is true of the late apocalyptic literature in which it is manifest when the author has in view a particular person, even though at times it may be difficult to decide who the person is.

Now while this generality of description is never found outside the Psalter with reference to an actual king, it is found in passages descriptive of the Messianic king, and in this case for the very good reason that generality alone was possible. Here, then, is good reason for enquiring whether these Psalms are not closely connected with the Messianic idea.

Another reason for questioning whether these Psalms refer to an actual contemporary ruler arises out of the numerous references to the king's immortality.

In some cases the reference need imply nothing more than the continuity of the king's race; this, *e.g.*, would fairly satisfy the terms of xlv. 6, 17; lxxxix. 29, 30, 37, 38; but it is not naturally suggested in xxi. 4, 6; lxi. 6, 7; lxxii. 5, 7; cx. 4. In these latter cases we must suppose the expressions hyperbolic, or parallels to the beliefs of Assyrians and Egyptians respecting their kings; thus Professor Cheyne says, "The exalted language of Hebrew writers with reference to their kings is now perfectly

explicable by the popular belief in kings as reflections of the divinity"; and, again, "probably a special 'golden mansion' was believed to be in store for worthy kings in heaven."¹ If the king in these Psalms is an actual contemporary, no doubt this is the best explanation, but it is important to observe what considerable assumptions it involves:—

1. We have no proof that this was the "popular belief" in Israel; it is merely an unconfirmed inference from analogous foreign beliefs. It is significant, but scarcely confirmatory, that the only assertions of the divinity or immortality of a king in the Old Testament, are put into the mouths of foreigners with reference to foreign kings; *vide* Is. xiv. 13, 14; Dan. ii. 4.

2. The immortality in most of these passages in the Psalms does not naturally suggest life in a "golden mansion," but continued life on earth.

III.

The aim of the preceding criticism has been to indicate the difficulties in the way of referring (1) the whole of our group of Psalms to the pre-exilic period, and (2) most of the references to the king to any actual person. It is only because these difficulties appear to me considerable, that I venture to suggest quite tentatively and provisionally, an interpretation of "the King" which in its turn has a considerable bearing on the criticism; for, as far as it holds good, the only argument for assigning these Psalms to the pre-exilic period falls away.

My arguments will frequently presuppose, or gain strength from, a general agreement with some conclusions of Professors Cheyne, Smend, and Stade.²

¹ *Book of Psalms*, Introd. to Ps. xxi., and note on verses 4, 5.

² I refer chiefly (1) to Smend's conclusion that even the Psalms spoken in first person singular generally reflect the national rather than the individual consciousness; see his Essay *Ueber das Ich der Psalmen*, in *Z. A. T. W.*, 1888, pp. 49-147. To a considerable extent this is accepted by Cheyne (*Origin*

In the first instance, for the sake of clearness, I will confine myself to a discussion of Ps. ii., where both the exegetical and the critical difficulties in the way of regarding the king as a pre-exilic monarch culminate. The evidence as to date I have already summarized; the exegetical difficulty, stated briefly, is the entire absence of any trait of individual personality in the king described.

These difficulties have been so much felt in the case of this Psalm that it has frequently been interpreted simply of the Messianic king; noticeably so by Bæthgen. But there is still considerable difficulty in regarding the king of Psalm ii. as completely analogous, *e.g.*, to the king in Isaiah's well-known prophecies. There (as in all prophetic references to the Messianic King), the king is sharply distinguished from the people of Jehovah whom he is to rule in righteousness. But here the king is contrasted only with the nations; of Israel as distinct from him there is no word.

This then suggests that the "king" is no individual, either contemporary or future, but the people of Jehovah as a whole, regarded as representatives to the world at large of Yahweh's sovereign power; briefly, the whole Psalm is a direct description of a present struggle between the Jewish nation and the world.¹

In support of this interpretation, I note:—

1. We have in Ps. ii. the usage already discussed by which the term "kings" is used as a virtual synonym of "nations"; the kings of *v.* 2 are in no clear way distinguished from the "nations" of *v.* 1. The same may be said of the "nations and uttermost parts of the earth" of *v.* 8, the "kings" and "judges of the earth" of *v.* 10. It is a

of the *Psalter*, especially pp. 261-265), to a limited extent by Driver (*Introduction*, pp. 365-367). (2) To Stade's discussion *Die Messianische Hoffnung im Psalter in Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 1892, pp. 369-413.

¹ This closely agrees with the view taken by Beer in the work cited above. I should, however, add that my own conclusions were reached before reading his discussion of the Psalm.

most natural inference that "my king" of v. 6, is a synonym for "my nation" or "my people," and that the author no more sharply distinguishes "the king" from "Israel" than the "kings" from "the nations." In other words, the idea of a personal Messiah, and much more of an actual ruler, was far from the writer's thoughts.

2. Smend has shown that in numerous Psalms written in the first person singular, the author speaks not as an individual, but as the nation; *i.e.* the Psalms in question refer to national not personal circumstances. It would therefore be quite in accordance with usage to regard the speaker of v. 7, as personating Israel. So regarded the verse is entirely explicable by Hebrew usage; for Israel is Yahweh's son, compare *e.g.* Hos. xi. 1, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt," and within the Psalter itself we have a clear instance of nations being said "to be born"¹ in Zion, see lxxxvii. 4-6. It is true that an individual king may also be said to be a "son of Yahweh"; but still the usage of יָלַד here would remain without complete analogy if the king be an individual.

3. In Deutero-Isaiah, with which the Psalm is connected by the use of the term "Kings," we find close parallels to the usage pre-supposed by the theory. Most characteristic of that prophet is the conception of the "Servant of Yahweh": this certainly at times covers the whole nation, at others it is confined to an ideal section of the nation; possibly, but by no means certainly, it also becomes in some passages² individualised. In any case *a term previously used of individuals* is by the prophet most frequently used of the nation;

¹ The parallel is slightly obscured in the English versions, since יָלַדְתִּיךָ of ii. 11 is rendered "I have begotten thee," but יָלַד of lxxxvii. 4-6 by "was born." The distinction between "begetting" and "bearing" is not to be pressed—in this case the word in Ps. ii. would have been הוֹלִידְתִּיךָ. In each case the word is simply a metaphor for "brought into existence."

² For references see Driver, *Isaiah: his Life and Times*, p. 175; the following pages contain a succinct account of the Deutero-Isaianic use.

and that because the nation, with its prophetic function to the whole world, corresponds, in the prophet's outlook, to the place of the individual prophet within the nation. I assume a similar usage in the Psalter, viz., that the nation in its relation to the world, corresponding to the king in his relation to the people, is termed "King." In favour of this we have not merely the general analogy just discussed, but the direct suggestion of another passage in the Deutero-Isaiah. In lv. 3-5, the promise is made that "the sure mercies of David" shall become the nation's; in a word the nation as a whole is in future to stand to Yahweh in the place of David; but the particular aspect in which the prophet is then regarding David is "of a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander to the peoples"; and thus the "idea of kingship," though not the term, is transferred to the nation. Thus the general mode of thought assumed by the theory is completely paralleled in II. Isaiah, where also its special development is suggested.

4. But in literature perhaps contemporaneous with the Psalm—the Book of Daniel—we find a yet more exact parallel. With regard to the interpretation of the seventh chapter of Daniel, as in reference to all other matters connected with the Old Testament, whether textual, critical or exegetical, difference of opinion and so far uncertainty prevails. Without arguing the point I will simply remark that as against Riehm¹ and many earlier scholars, I follow, to cite merely two English scholars, Professors Stanton² and Bevan³ in considering that this chapter contains no reference to a personal Messiah. The chapter contains an allegorical representation of Israel's ideal relation to the world: four of the great world empires are represented by four beasts, Israel by the

¹ In *Messianic Prophecy* (Eng. Trans.), p. 193, footnote 3.

² In *The Jewish and Christian Messiah*, p. 109 f.

³ In his *Commentary on Daniel*, pp. 118 f., whence it appears that Jewish commentators for the most part regarded the "Son of Man" as personal, but Ibn Ezra maintained the national interpretation.

"Son of Man." Now of this "Son of Man" we read, "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a *kingdom*, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his *kingdom* that which shall not be destroyed," v. 14. Here then we note that to Israel as a whole a kingdom is given; the nation symbolised by the "Son of Man" actually received what the king of Psalm ii. is promised for the asking, "the nations for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." The interpretation which follows is an equally significant parallel; this runs—These great beasts, which are four, are four *kings*, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever," verses 17, 18. Here the "saints of the Most High" correspond to the "Son of Man" in verse 14, and are contrasted with the "four kings"; but the "four kings" are four nations or empires; the fifth empire, the saints of the Most High, might therefore fittingly, in a poetical passage, be termed "king." Lastly, in verse 27—"And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him"—we have the significant change from the plural, "saints of the Most High," to the singular, "his" and "him."

If it be once granted that as II. Isaiah idealises all Israel as "Yahweh's servant," so another may have idealised the nation as Yahweh's king—and I have just stated what appear good reasons for granting this—it seems to me as clear as from the nature of the case is possible that this idealisation is present in Ps. ii.: for the character of the Psalm forbids an explanation such as Daniel gives of the "Son of Man," and its brevity that multiplicity of reference which leaves us in no doubt as to the meaning of the "servant of Yahweh" in II. Isaiah. The assumption is con-

firmed by this consideration—the resemblance of the king in Ps. ii. to different kings to whom it has been supposed to have referred is purely general, very remote and never convincing; the resemblance, on the other hand, to the “Son of Man,” or, as otherwise termed, “the saints of the Most High,” is both close and essential.

Assuming now that the idealisation of Israel as Yahweh’s king existed, I proceed briefly to consider the possibility of interpreting the other “king” Psalms in the light of it.

Ps. lxxii. Most present theories of interpretation are unsatisfactory: consideration of date alone makes it difficult to refer it to the old kingdom; Professor Cheyne, who derives his view from distinguished forerunners—Ols-hausen, Reuss, and Hitzig—fails to convince me that it is a glorification of Ptolemy Philadelphus; and against both views there are the general exegetical presumptions stated above. The remaining alternatives are to regard it as purely Messianic, *i.e.*, as a prayer for the ruler of the people in the Messianic age¹; or, as in Ps. ii., to regard the king as an idealisation of the nation. I prefer the latter on this condition—that we may assume for the conception as much flexibility as marks that of the “servant of Yahweh” in Deutero-Isaiah: this is necessitated by verse 4, where the king is, to a certain extent, distinguished from the people; but this is precisely what we find in Deutero-Isaiah, where, in the same passage, the servant is identified with, and distinguished from, Israel; cf. *e.g.*, xlix. 1-6, “Listen, O isles, unto me. . . . Yahweh hath called me from the womb—and said unto me, Thou art *my servant*; *Israel*, in whom I will be glorified; and now saith Yahweh that formed me from the womb *to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him and that Israel may be gathered unto him*: Yea, he saith, It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to

¹ Cf. R. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 439, “I am not sure that the ideal picture of Ps. lxxii. requires any historical background. ‘Entrust thy judgments to a king, and thy righteousness to a king’s son’ may very well be a prayer for the re-establishment of the Davidic dynasty under a Messianic king according to prophecy.”

raise up the tribes of Jacob—I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles." I prefer to assume a certain national reference—

(1.) Because of the close connection with Isaiah lx.—a description of the future of Israel. On the other hand, the parallels with Is. ix. 1-6 and xi. 1-11 are noticeable.

(2.) Because there are good reasons for regarding the Psalm as a product of the period after the exile, but before the Maccabees, *i.e.*, of a period when there was no actual king. At such times the conception of a personal Messianic king apparently dies away;¹ but it was precisely at such a time that the Deutero-Isaiah declares the whole nation heir of the "leader and commander" David.

(3.) Because of the parallels to verse 17 *c, d*. It is Abraham's seed, Israel as a whole, that is to become proverbial (cf. Gen. xlviii. 20) for prosperity—cf. Gen. xxii. 18; xxvi. 4; xviii. 18 (cf. xii. 3; xxviii. 14). The national character of the object of the sentence is moreover supported by the national character of the subjects² of these clauses. The *nations* would more naturally invoke upon themselves the blessing of a nation, than of an individual—the king.

(4.) Because of the reference to immortality in verses 5, 17. These are in complete analogy with many Psalm passages, if they refer to the immortality of the race; they are without analogy in the Old Testament, if they are a hyperbolic expression of a wish for the long life of the king; they are not clearly paralleled in earlier references to the personal Messianic King—not even in Is. ix. 6, 7. Perhaps the suggestion is worth making that the later belief in the immortality of the Messianic King was in-

¹ Cf. Riehm, *Messianic Prophecy*, Part II., especially pp. 179-193.

² In clause *c* we ought no doubt to read with the LXX. ויתברכו בו כל משפחות הארץ, so Cheyne, Kautzsch. Otherwise the subject (כל גוים) of clause *d* must be regarded as explaining the unexpressed subject of clause *c*. In any case the individualistic idea expressed by R. V. ("men shall be blessed in him") is not intended by the Hebrew.

fluenced by an erroneous individualistic interpretation of passages such as these, which originally had a national reference.

Pss. lxxxix. and xviii. must be taken in close connection with one another and with Is. lv. 3-5. That they are really associated with one another appears from a comparison of lxxxix. 50, and xviii. 44, with the prophetic passage; both the Psalms, at any rate in their present form, appear to me dependent on the prophecy, and therefore post-exilic. But at this point the question of date must only be discussed in so far as it is influenced by interpretation.

The first part (strictly verses 4, 5, 20-38) of Psalm lxxxix. is a prolix poetical reproduction of the promise made to David in 2 Sam. vii. of the perpetuity of the monarchy in his seed; this being so, it is natural to attempt to explain "the anointed" of verse 39 (Eng. 38), who is cast off and rejected, as a Davidic king. But the description is far more applicable to a people than an individual, and has its parallels¹ in other descriptions of the disasters and distress of the nation. The national character of the Messiah comes out clearly when we refer to verses 51, 52; here Yahveh's anointed=the speaker of the Psalm=the servants² of Yahweh, *i.e.*, the nation. In verse 50, "Lord, where are thy former mercies, which thou swarest unto David in thy faithfulness," we have a

¹ Especially in Lamentations. The parallels between Ps. lxxxix. and Lamentations scarcely appear to have gained the attention they deserve. I append some of the more striking: in considering them it must be remembered that, though Lam. i.-iii. are largely spoken in the first person singular, the speaker is the nation. (Cf. Driver, *Introduction*, p. 431) —

With Ps. vv. 2, 3, cf. Lam. iii. 22-24.	With Ps. 40 <i>b</i> (the crown) cf. Lam. v. 16.
„ 34 „ iii. 31.	„ 42ff „ ii. 15ff.
„ 39 „ iii. 1; v. 22	„ 51, 52 „ v. 1, 2.
„ 39ff „ i. 12; ii. 5ff.	

² Cheyne and some others read with the Pesch., the singular—"My servant." For that there seems no good reason apart from the theory that an individual is being described. The LXX. supports the plural of M. T., which, as the harder reading, should be retained.

tolerably clear appeal to the prophetic promise, "I will make with you an everlasting covenant, the sure mercies of David" (Is. lv. 3). The reference to the Messiah's "youth" in verse 46 in no way precludes a national reference; perhaps rather the reverse, for cf. cxxix. 1 (and lxxi. 17). Of verses 41, 42 (Engl. 40, 41) Professor Cheyne rightly remarks that they "are clearly based on lxxx. 13, [Eng. 12], and refer to the Jewish nation." This being so, there seems little ground for his claim that while the description partly fits the people, "the anointed" of verse 39 refers to "the Davidic king (or rather the Davidic royalty)." Apparently he bases his claim on the reference to the crown in verse 40, but the passage in Lam. v. 16 shows that this would be equally suitable in a description of the people. I conclude, therefore, that this section of the Psalm refers neither to a contemporary king nor to a future Messianic king, but to the Messianic people; the collective term Messiah of verse 39 corresponds to the distributive term saints (verse 20), as "Son of Man" in Dan. vii. 14 to "saints of the Most High."

The only reference to a personal king occurs in verse 19, "Our king belongs to the Holy One of Israel."¹ Possibly the verse belongs to a section which formed no original part of the Psalm; verse 20 certainly connects more naturally with verse 5 than with verse 19.² But if the reference is original, it is far from clear that the king is an actual contemporary; even Bæthgen, who claims so many of the "king" Psalms as pre-exilic, convinced by the other evidence that Ps. lxxxix. is post-exilic, interprets the reference thus: "Israel's king, though in the reality wanting, is yet ideally present; because Yahweh has

¹ This rendering of the line seems to me the only legitimate one; מלכנו in clause *b* must be parallel to מלכנו in clause *a*. If, following the ancient versions and R. V. marg., we were to render, "Even to the Holy One of Israel, our king," the possibility of a reference to a contemporary monarch wholly disappears; but the rendering is certainly wrong.

² Cf. Cheyne on the passage in his commentary.

promised him, he already belongs to Yahweh." In this case the Psalm introduces as a feature in its ideal future a personal king.

Just as in Psalm lxxxix. the author complains (vv. 39-52) that the nation of the present is not experiencing the promised mercies of David, so in Psalm xviii. the author praises God because the promise that the nation shall enjoy the eminence of David has been fulfilled. From one standpoint he speaks in the name of David, from another in that of the nation. Granted this, the Psalm is a satisfactory whole, and we need not have recourse to theories of interpolation, such as are put forward by recent upholders of the Davidic authorship of the Psalm. "David and his seed" (52*c*), on the analogy of Is. lv. 3 5 and Ps. lxxxix., will be Israel, who is termed in one parallel clause Yahweh's Messiah, and in the other "Yahweh's King" (52*a, b*). Without discussing the Psalm at length, I will briefly draw attention to the entire absence of anything necessarily personal from the Psalm.

The deliverance and present prosperity are described by a series of figurative or purely general expressions (*e.g.*, vv. 17, 18, 20, 29, 30, 35), such as might well be chosen to describe a national deliverance; but, one use of them, unrelieved as they are by a singular particular trait, is not what we should expect in a description of the deliverance of an individual. Bæthgen himself points out several verses which he says would be more suitable in the mouth of the community than in that of "an individual and in particular, David," and supposes these to be due to the overworking for the use of the community of a Davidic triumphal ode composed for a particular occasion. But the fact is, these differ in no essential way from the rest of the Psalm; indications of the particular fortunes of an individual we seek for in vain. Bæthgen apparently finds such indications in verses 44 and 45, for he says, "In favour of Davidic authorship is the following: The poet is a leader and king, who has carried on victorious wars and subdued peoples whom he had hitherto

not known." Undoubtedly if we had in this Psalm the utterance of a Hebrew king concerning his own fortunes, its author would be David; but we have not. Even in verses 44, 45, we have nothing distinctively personal; on the other hand Israel here acknowledges that the promise of Is. lv. 3-5, has been fulfilled. The resemblance between the speaker of the Psalm and the Israel of the prophet is complete, only what the prophet places in the future, the Psalmist places in the past (or present). The parallels are worth noting.

<i>The speaker of the Psalm</i> is "head of the nations," 44 <i>b</i> ;	It follows from Is. lv. 3-5 that <i>Israel</i> will be a "leader and commander of the peoples," 4 ;
receives the service of unknown nations, 44 <i>c</i> -46,	will receive the service of unknown nations, 5 ;
owing to God's assistance, 47, 48,	owing to God's assistance, verse 5 ;
who is loving to his anointed, David and his seed for evermore, verse 52.	who makes with Israel the everlasting covenant, the sure mercies of David.

We are thus left without any reason for treating the Psalm as the account of the fortunes of an individual; there are many indications that the deliverance of the nation is the subject of the poem; some of these are alluded to above. It must suffice to add that the promise (*v.* 50), to praise God *among the nations*, is the promise to fulfil the task of Israel.

Psalms lxi., lxiii. The strangeness of the allusion in these Psalms to the king has been remarked by R. Smith¹; but I fail to see how his suggestion that the verses containing them are a liturgical addition eases the difficulty; they would in that case presumably refer to a Maccabæan prince; but this would leave us with the difficulty of explaining the term מֶלֶךְ, and also why a liturgical reference to the king should be added in just these Psalms. Certainly the allusion to the king, if he be not identical with the speaker of the Psalms, is, as R. Smith says, unnatural; but if he be identical, it is entirely natural, for the speaker is here unmistakably expressing the national consciousness

¹ *Old Testament in Jewish Church* (Second Edition), p. 438.

and hopes (verses 5, 9), and thus the connection between verses 7 and 8, and verse 9, is clear; if Yahweh will grant the kingly people perpetual life, they will render him perpetual praise.

The national reference is probable, though less manifest, in lxiii.

There is much also in favour of interpreting Psalm xxi. in the same way; it contains nothing of a distinctly personal character—no one will lay stress on the “crown”¹ of verse 3; and the repeated and emphatic references to immortality are entirely in harmony with the thought of the Psalter if the immortality implied be racial, but only to be paralleled from Egyptian and Assyrian ideas, if a quasi-divinity is being attributed to the king.²

With some difficulty Psalm xx. might, perhaps, be interpreted likewise; but in this case the date which requires such an interpretation (post-exilic and pre-Maccabæan) needs to be first proved. To explain it of a personal, non-existent and only ideal king is difficult. The alternatives appear to me to identify the king with the nation,³ or with one of the (latest) pre-exilic kings. Psalm xx. it should in any case be noted, differs from the rest of the “king” Psalms, except xlv., in its greater particularity of detail, and from all except xlv. and cx.⁴ in being addressed to the king. To Psalm xlv. the theory of interpretation I have been suggesting, certainly does not apply; it is questionable in the case of Psalm cx.

In three of the four Psalms where the king is termed Yahweh’s Messiah, the king most clearly appeared to be the nation (ii., xviii., lxxxix.); in Psalms xxviii. and lxxxiv.

¹ Cf. Lam. v. 6, and the note on Ps. lxxxix. and Lamentations above.

² Vide *supra*, p. 8.

³ The allusion in this Psalm to the “king” depends on accepting the reading of the LXX. (cf. R. V. marg.). In that case note that “king” is parallel to “us.”

⁴ To which we must add Ps. xxi., if verses 9-13 be separated from verse 14, and considered as an address to the king (so Cheyne). Ps. lxxii. 5a, is corrupt.

where Yahweh's Messiah, but not the king, is mentioned, there is therefore little reason for finding a personal reference. Note particularly in xxviii. 9, the four terms "people," "anointed," "people," "inheritance"; it is unlikely that the second only is personal, when the other three must be national.¹

My conclusions can be briefly summed up as follows:—

1. *Exegetical*.—In Pss. ii., lxxii., xviii., lxxxix., xxi., the king referred to is an idealisation of the people in virtue of its sovereign functions, and terms used of the king are only, or most satisfactorily, to be explained by the circumstances, not of an individual monarch, but of the (royal) nation. In Ps. lxi., probably also in Ps. lxiii., the author speaks in the name of the nation, and consequently appropriates the term "king." Possibly Pss. xx. and cx. may be analogously explained. In Ps. xxxiii. the reference is purely proverbial. The interpretation of Ps. xlv. I have left out of account: my own theory is inapplicable to it, and it is difficult to decide between conflicting views.

2. *Critical*.—In these Psalms (including xxviii. and lxxxiv., but with the possible exceptions of xx., xlv., cx.) a contemporary monarch is not alluded to, and the only evidence hitherto adduced in favour of their pre-exilic origin thus falls through. On the other hand, granted the validity of the proposed interpretation, it will, no doubt, be conceded that the reference to the king becomes additional evidence of post-exilic date; it forms a weighty addition to the evidence from ideas. These Psalms are, therefore, post-exilic; but xviii., xxi., xxviii. date from the fifth century; lxi., lxiii., lxxii. are not later than the end of the fourth; lxxxiv. and lxxxix. are pre-Maccabæan; ii. and xxxiii. need not be, and the former probably is not, earlier than the middle of the second century.

Of the two uncertain Psalms, xx. and cx., if they refer to actual contemporary rulers, xx. must be pre-exilic,

¹ Cf. also Hab. iii. 13, where the national character of the Messiah has been most generally recognised.

because, standing in Book I., it cannot be Maccabæan ; and cx. will almost certainly be Maccabæan, since language and position render a pre-exilic origin unlikely.

In the case of xlv., position excludes a Maccabæan origin, while position and language, not to speak of ideas, render a pre-exilic origin unlikely.

So far as my interpretation holds good, it serves to confirm (for the period from the exile to the Maccabees) Mr. Montefiore's statement :—"The Messianic king, at any rate, as distinguished from the general and wider conception of the Messianic age, was of comparative insignificance in the Jewish religion,"¹ while at the same time it shows that these Psalms, like so many others, reflect the Messianic hopes and the Messianic consciousness of the people. They are not remotely connected with the Messianic hope as being ideal descriptions of an actual ruler ; they are directly Messianic, as being due to the hope and conviction that, through Israel, God will exercise dominion over the world ; for, as Professor Stade justly observes, a passage is Messianic, not because it refers to a coming personal deliverer, but in virtue of reference to the kingdom of God.

G. BUCHANAN GRAY.

¹ See *Hibbert Lecture*, p. 416.
